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The Ancient Jew and the Modern German

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A Parallel

By

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The Ancient Jew and the Modern German

A Parallel

ANALOGY and parallel have their place in as far as we keep them in it, and may afford amusement, if not instruction. Possibly some of both may be derived from comparing the Jew of the early ~~New~~ Old Testament books with the modern German, as self-revealed of late, especially in the past year.

It may be prefaced that Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and others may be regarded as collectively representing the Jewish, just as the present Kaiser, his grandfather, Bismarck, and others represent the German, or, more accurately, the Prussian spirit.

The Jews found themselves hemmed in and hampered by the Egyptians, dominated by a rich, luxurious, outwardly flourishing, but inwardly rotten power, — a relation somewhat analogous to that which the Ger-

mans have thought themselves to occupy toward Great Britain. Moses showed them how badly off they were, how necessary for their development and happiness was expansion, and stirred imagination and greed alike, by picturing to them a promised land flowing with milk and honey, a real place in the sun, theirs by right, because God had set it apart for them, his chosen people; to be won by might derived from God Himself. The Jews had a monopoly in God, and found this monopoly very convenient in justifying them in the fulfillment of material desires, absolutely without reference to the rights of others. God commands them through Moses to allege the pretext of a desire to worship in the wilderness, and to borrow freely the valuables of the Egyptians. God opens the Red Sea for them and their borrowings, saving them and the plunder, but drowning the Egyptian troops to a man. They approach the promised land.

They apply first to the king of Edom for permission to pass through his lands, to

strike a rich and unready people with whom they have no quarrel, only a burning desire for booty. The terms of their request have a very modern application.

Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.

And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.

And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only (without doing anything else) go through on my feet.

And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand.

Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

They then send messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying:

Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king's high way, until we be past thy borders.

And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel.

And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong.

For "Amorites" one might read "Belgians."

The Amalekites and their fate are not devoid of interest. What their offence was does not appear, but they were between Israel and the sun and had land and goods. These they tried to defend.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

The story of Amalek has not escaped the restless mind of the Kaiser, who, if Sunday finds him on the "Hohenzollern" or a battleship, preaches a sermon to the ship's com-

pany. Of these sermons only one, up to 1903, was reported in full. This one was preached July 29, 1900, on the "Hohenzollern," as the punitive expedition to China was setting out, and takes Amalek as its text. He says in part:

And who to-day does not understand what lesson our text conveys, for again the pagan spirit of Amalek has stirred in far Asia, and with great cunning and power, with fire and murder, they seek to hinder the triumphal march of Christian morals, of Christian faith, of European commerce and education. And again God has ordered: "Choose men; go forth and fight against Amalek!" Our German people will be the granite rock on which Almighty God will complete the building of the civilization of the world.

In this connection extracts from two speeches to troops embarking for China may be quoted:

You are to fight against a cunning, courageous, well-armed, and cruel foe. When you are upon him, know this: Spare nobody, make no prisoners. Use your weapons in a manner to make every Chinaman for a thousand years to come forego the wish to as much as look askance at a German.

How familiar this sounds to an old Testa-

ment reader! By August 2 something has occurred to change the Kaiser's view of the Chinaman, for on that date, again to departing troops, he says:

> By nature the Chinaman is a cowardly cur, but he is tricky and double-faced.

Here we have the gospel of Schrecklichkeit, in the practice of which the Jews were past masters. They applied it in varying degree to different conquered people. In one case they seem to indulge in no more killing than is necessary to prevail, enslaving the people (hewers of wood and drawers of water) and seizing their goods. In another, every male is put to the sword. In another, every living man, woman, and child, and all flocks and herds, are slain, their weapons being so used as to make even a cow or a sheep for a thousand years to come forego the wish to as much as look askance at a Jew.

A careful reader of the Kaiser's speeches will find that he really knows the existence of the New Testament and of the New Dispen-

sation; but the God whom he affects and has chosen as his partner is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of battle. For his only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, the Prince of Peace, he seems to have little use in his business.

The sending of spies among other peoples seems to have been a fine art among the Jews. It is recorded that in Jericho they lodged with Rahab, the harlot, whose services were later richly rewarded. Germany also has sent swarms of spies into all lands, and her chemists study the caloric and other values of their milk and honey. Thus, under Moses, and Joshua the war-lord, the land of Bashan, of the Midianites, of the Ammonites, Hittites, etc., was overwhelmed, and Israel won to the western bank of the Jordan. How, after Moses' death, Joshua, uniting the priestly and prophetic functions of Moses with his own military functions, and adding the mantle of Moses to his own breastplate, crossed the Jordan and waged ruthless and successful war on the owners of desirable lands, is

always good reading, and has a special interest at the present time. Blood and iron mark the path.

Thus the Jews "hacked their way" into the possession of the promised land, and waxed fat on the milk and honey thereof. Moses was a great man and accomplished great things, considering the times and means at his disposal. During forty years he prepared his people for the promised land, though he did not enter it himself.

But now has arisen a modern — and a greater — than — Moses, who, after forty years of preparation, finds the chosen people of to-day debarred from the place in the sun, — the promised land, to which their virtue and might entitle them.

There was no such thing in those days as public opinion as we moderns understand the term. For its existence to-day we may all be grateful. It is a force which no people, however aggressive and self-righteous, can wholly disregard. As far as freedom from the influence of public opinion goes, the Turks

of the present day seem to be a survival from ancient times, the nearest rivals of the ancient Jew. The Teutons do their best, but public opinion counts for more in Europe than in Armenia. It is in China, however, that the German lets himself go.

The Jews were monotheists. Jehovah was their only God and their monopoly. The Germans, however, are bitheistic, and have gone the Jews, to use the language of the street, "one better." The Kaiser has his Jehovah, of whom the Germans are the present-day chosen people, for the superstitious folk who still believe in God and Christ; but he has, in addition, the god Kultur, of which the intellectuals are the prophets. The Moslems say, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet;" the intellectuals, "There is but one Kultur, and that Teutonic." In the days of Moses and his successors there were unbelievers, but the spiritual power was strong enough to severely punish and root them out,—Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, for instance. At the present day among the

unbelievers the intellectuals, so-called, are prominent. They don't deny that there are other Kulturs any more than Israel denied that there were other gods,—Baal, Ashtaroth, and the rest. "For the Lord our God is a great God, *a great King among* ALL *Gods.*" But these were false gods, just as non-Teutonic Kulturs are false kulturs, destined to be swallowed up, as were the rods of Pharaoh's sorcerers, by the rod of Aaron. The intellectuals preach the "over-individual" and the State. All of them who are professors, are, as State officers, part of the State. Woe, grievous woe lurks for the professor who strays from the political paths laid out for him. Thus God, for those who believe in Him, and Kultur, for those who worship it, are yoked together to redeem and subject the world. Thus bitheistic Germany offers a choice between Jehovah and Kultur, while putting no obstacle in the path of those who, for safety first, pray alike to Good Lord and Good Devil.

In season and out of season the Kaiser pro-

claims himself the Lord's anointed, no silent partner, but inspired by inside information. The monopoly on God which he claims for himself and the Germans, he claims with unction as well as with skill. He comes by this rightly, for was not his "never-to-be-forgotten grandfather" called the "Emperor Pius the First"?

A few quotations from his speeches may be given in illustration. He says:

I look upon the people and nation handed on to me as a responsibility conferred upon me by God; and that it is, as is written in the Bible, my duty to increase this heritage, for which one day I shall be called upon to give an account; those who try to interfere with my task I shall crush.

And again he says:

I regard my whole position as given to me direct from Heaven, and that I have been called by the Highest to do His work, by One to Whom I must one day render an account.

There is only one master in this country,—I am he, and I will not tolerate another.

There is only one law,—my law, the law which I myself lay down.

And yet again:

I go my way, etc.

I could wish that some more erudite and thorough student of the Old Testament had painted where I can only sketch. The war is already fifteen months old and was born with teeth; but I have only seen hints of what I have tried to set forth.

In closing, I recall the final overwhelming of the Jews. First, ten of the twelve tribes were lost; then the two remaining were carried into slavery, later returning to Jerusalem, but finally lost their country, and their descendants are wanderers on the face of the earth, a race without a nationality or country, held together by a religion still vital, but powerfully modified by the solvent action of free institutions and the discipline of adversity. The modern Jew is a good citizen wherever decently treated. In America, and Great Britain especially, he contributes at least his share to the common welfare, in a broad sense. Few pro-Allies wish to see the

Germans scattered like the Jews, but all hope that free institutions may have some such action on Teutonism as they are exercising on the Judaic religion.

[*A kind clerical friend calls my attention to* 2 *Esdras xi and xii* 31-35. *A multiheaded eagle* [*Germany*] *comes out of the sea and rules the whole world intolerably. A lion* [*Great Britain*] *comes out of the wood, rebukes and casts down the eagle. The prophetic analogy is certainly curious even if not quite accurate.*]

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